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THE
SELF-EXISTENCE
AND
SUPREME DEITY
Of CHRIST AS GOD,
AND HIS
GENERATION and SONSHIP
As IMMANUEL GOD-MAN,

As revealed in the sacred Scriptures, and explained in a
Treatise on the Sonship, Person, and Offices of Christ,

D E F E N D E D :

Against the Rev. Mr ADAM GIB, Minister of the
Gospel in Edinburgh: K

BY THE AUTHOR OF THAT TREATISE. X

JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures,—for they are they which testify of me.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by W. DARLING, for J. DICKSON, W. GRAY, and
sold by them, and by E. and C. DILLY, London.

M. DCC. LXXVII.

The Rev. William Dalgliesh D.D. Peebles.



ERRATA.

Page 13	Line 1.	for	<i>this day</i>	read <i>to-day.</i>
P. 14.	L. 9.			read Mr. Gib.
P. 21.	L. 31.			dele that
P. 23.	L. 23.			read Son of God.

T H E

SELF-EXISTENCE AND SUPREME DEITY
OF CHRIST AS GOD,

A N D

HIS GENERATION AND SONSHIP
AS IMMANUEL GOD-MAN,

D E F E N D E D.

NOTHING can be more unjust, than to treat a friend to religion as an enemy to it, because he maintains its great articles upon more scriptural and solid ground, and means thereby to serve its general interests. The goodness of his design entitles him to a fair hearing from every friend to religion; and, with all its judicious friends, the explications he gives of it will receive a degree of assent and regard proportioned to the evidence by which they are supported. These maxims of common sense apply to all our attempts to unfold and establish the truths of Christianity, but particularly to the occasion and subject of the following remarks:

A Treatise was lately published upon the Sonship, person and offices of the Son of God, Christ Jesus. The design of the author was to establish that supreme divinity of our blessed Saviour which the scriptures ascribe to him, to ascertain his proper

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per person as Son of God, and to show that these characters as held forth in scripture are perfectly consistent. As these are plainly articles of revealed religion, the author resolved to consult carefully the sacred oracles, that he might know what they delivered with regard to them. On inquiry, he found, that, as to his divine essence, Christ is clearly affirmed to be Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent God, equally as the other persons in the sacred Trinity; that, in his personal character, he is held forth as the Logos, or Divine Word, who in the beginning was with God, and was God, and by whom all things were created, John i. 1. And that this divine eternal Word, when incarnate by the divine power, in the womb, and born of the virgin Mary, is uniformly represented in this his person of Immanuel, as the Son of God. Whenever Christ's generation is mentioned in scripture, he found it related to this incarnation of the second person of the Godhead, the co-eternal Word: whenever he is represented as Son of God, he is understood as the Word made Flesh. All the prophets who mention him as Son of God, foretold him to be so as God-man the Messiah, and Christ himself, and his apostles and evangelists, hold him forth as Son of God in this most natural sense, and in this only.

This explication of our Saviour's Sonship, as it has the unanimous support of the inspired writers, so the author believed that it must also be attended with several happy consequences in the Christian religion. It preserves inviolate the Trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine essence, which the scriptures so clearly reveal; and explains these consubstantial Persons more agreeably to the immutability of the divine essence, and the equality of these Persons, than the grounds of their
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subsistence and distinction received in the schools, of one of these persons begetting another, who yet in essence is self-existent, and a third receiving his subsistence from the two former by procession, who yet is equally self-existent as the other two from whom he is supposed to proceed. It gives the divine person of our blessed Saviour that equality in every respect with every other divine person in the co-essential Trinity, and so frees his divinity from all the objections to which, from the doctrine of its being generated, it has been so much exposed. It explains this generation and Sonship of Christ, not only in a way that is more intelligible, but in perfect correspondence with every account given of them in scripture, and in perfect consistence with his supreme divinity, which the sacred oracles so clearly declare, and which the Christian church ought ever to hold firm as the great foundation of our faith and hope.

Under these convictions, the author communicated his thoughts on this subject to some of the most learned and judicious of his acquaintance in both parts of the kingdom, who advised the publication of them, as what might set this important article of our faith in a more scriptural and just light. The book was printed and published at London, that it might circulate the more easily into those places where the divinity of our Blessed Saviour has been denied or impugned. That its reception might depend solely on its own evidence, without the smallest prepossession or prejudice taken from the author, he only signified his profession, without prefixing his name. Above a year has now elapsed since it was published: The author has had the satisfaction to find, that its reception has not been unfavourable. Many divines, as well as private Christians, have been

convinced that the explication of our Saviour's Sonship, therein contained, is the scriptural and just one: and even those persons, who hesitated to receive it, have been obliged to acknowledge that it is supported by much evidence of scripture; that of all explications of this great article, which they have seen, it is the most rational and intelligible, the most consistent with the self-existent and supreme divinity of our adorable Redeemer, and that it places this fundamental principle of our religion in the most exalted light. If any attacked it, the author expected it would be some abettors of the Arian or Socinian principles, as against these the book was evidently designed. None however appeared in opposition to it, till the Reverend Mr. Adam Gib, minister of the Seceding associate congregation at Edinburgh, thought proper, first to preach against it, and then to publish his sermon. In this discourse, Mr. Gib absurdly thinks, that the author of the book he condemns robs the blessed Saviour of his glory, when he gives him a necessarily-existent and self-existent divine person, rather than a begotten one; and explains his generation and Sonship in the only way that can consist with his possessing every divine perfection. He attempts to prove the eternal generation of Christ in his divine person, rather than give him a self-existent personality, equal with the first person; but many of his arguments contain not the least intimation either of generation or Sonship; and of those which do, not one of them affirms his generation from eternity, as the divine Word; but all of them relate to him as the Word made flesh, and hold him forth as the Son of God in this person and character. He endeavours to refute the explication of Christ's Sonship in the treatise mentioned; but his refutation is little else than a most dissingenuous misrepresentation

ration of it: Nay, in attempting to find out, and fix errors on others, he has discovered his own; some of which tend not a little to subvert several important articles of the Christian religion, both in faith and practice. These things are so obvious to every intelligent man, who will take the trouble to compare Mr. Gib's sermon with the treatise he attacks, that many of the author's most judicious friends advised him to pass it over as unworthy of notice. He himself was for some time of the same opinion. And indeed if Mr. Gib had only attempted to refute the explication of the Sonship mentioned, and to establish another, the author could easily have submitted to the impartial world, which was supported by the most convincing evidence. But as he has most grossly misrepresented that explication, as he has endeavoured, so far as his influence extends, to excite prejudices against the Treatise and its Author, he has resolved to do justice to truth and to himself, by fairly exposing the false reasoning, unfair representation, and dangerous errors, contained in that sermon, that the World may see where the charge of error and heresy truly falls.

In reviewing a sermon, I shall proceed somewhat in the method of sermons, and therefore,

I. I shall examine the scriptures Mr. Gib has produced to prove, that our blessed Saviour has his divine subsistence as a person in the Godhead by generation, and is Son of God from eternity in this sense; and shall show, that they prove no such doctrine, but something very different.

II. I shall exhibit the disingenuous misrepresentation which Mr. Gib hath given of my explication of our Saviour's Sonship as God-man; and

show, that it is not attended with those things with which he falsely charges it.

III. I shall point out some of those errors Mr. Gib hath advanced in his sermon subversive of the articles of our holy religion, that the world may be aware of principles so heretical and dangerous; and then shall conclude the whole by some proper reflections.

I. I am to examine the scriptures Mr. Gib has brought to prove, that our blessed Saviour has his divine subsistence, as a Person in the Godhead by generation, and is Son of God from eternity in this sense; and shall shew; that they prove no such doctrine, but something very different.

Mr. Gib begins his proof of Christ's eternal generation, by affirming, (p. 16.) "That some scriptures give direct evidence, that his generation was from all eternity." By direct evidence is meant, that some scriptures expressly declare, that the First Person of the Godhead from eternity begat the Second Person, the Son; that this divine co-essential Person does not exist by the the same necessary self-existence with the First Person, but by a generation; or, that the First Person is from eternity the Father of the Second Person; and the Second Person is, from all eternity, his begotten Son. This is the meaning of direct evidence, as understood by all men, and as here stated by Mr. Gib himself. But has Mr. Gib produced any such passages of scripture in proof of his affirmation? Not one. The reason is obvious: There is not any such passage to be found in all the Book of God. More than a hundred times is God mentioned in scripture as the Father of Christ; but never once is he called his Eternal Father, or said to have begotten him as to his divine

vine Person, or to have begotten him from eternity. More than a hundred times is Christ called in scripture the Son of God, but not once his eternal Son. His divine subsistence as a person in the Godhead is often declared; but never once is it declared, or so much as hinted, that he holds that divine subsistence by generation. God is often called his Father, but never as he is God alone, or the Second Person of the Godhead; but as he is God-man, the Messiah. Christ is often called God's Son, but never his Eternal Son. In his divine personality, he is represented as having the same essence, and necessary existence, with the First Person, and is therefore called Jehovah, the Everlasting Father, Isa. ix. 6.; the Word who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, John i. 1.; but never once is God the Father affirmed to have begotten this co-eternal and co-essential Subsistence with him in the same Godhead; nor is Christ ever said to have been begotten from eternity in this his divine Person.

Where then is the direct evidence from scripture, of Christ's eternal generation in his divine person, which Mr. Gib has affirmed? If Mr. Gib could have found this direct evidence, as a friend to truth he should have produced it, and every sincere Christian would have yielded to its authority. If he knew there was no such evidence, how, as an honest man, could he affirm it? This is exposing both himself and his cause to very great suspicions. If the generation of the Second Person in the Godhead from eternity by the First had been a truth, a truth of such capital importance in the Christian system, and so essential to the faith and salvation of mankind as Mr. Gib often represents it, we might reasonably have expected that in some passage or other of revelation, it would have been expressly affirmed: but since

since it is not affirmed; nay, since among some hundreds of times this great article is revealed in scripture, and God called the Father of Christ, but never his Eternal Father; and Christ the Son of God, his begotten Son, but never once his Eternal Son, or said once to have been begotten in his divine Person from eternity, but signified to be begotten in his incarnation in time, we have every reason to believe, that his generation and Sonship, as mentioned in scripture, relate not to the subsistence of his divine person as God, but to the constitution and production of his mediatorial Person as God-man. And I must be plain to tell Mr. Gib, that as the total silence of scripture as to the eternal generation and Sonship of the divine Person of Christ, when yet the existence, eternity, and divinity, of that Person are so often repeated, is a strong presumptive evidence against his opinion: So his affirming there is direct evidence for that opinion, when he knew there was no such evidence, will, with every judicious man, militate as much against the credit of his other proofs of it; for never sure, can we trust a man in matter of argument, when he shows us in the very entry on it, that we cannot trust him in matter of fact.

Sensible that he could produce no direct evidence, of the generation of Christ's divinity, Mr. Gib proceeds to bring his other evidence. It consists of the principal passages of scripture which have been usually brought to prove that the Second Person of the Godhead exists not by the same self-existence, or necessary existence, by which the divine essence, or First Person in that essence, are held to exist; but that his divine Person in the Godhead subsists by generation by the First Person, and is to be considered in this sense as Son of God, begotten by him from all eternity. We shall

shall proceed likewise with all possible care to examine them, and by every just rule of interpreting scripture, to ascertain their proper meaning; by which it will be shewn, that they hold forth no such doctrine; but relate either to the eternal existence of the Second Person in the Godhead, without the least intimation of his being generated; or to the generation and exhibition of that divine Person as Immanuel, holding forth Christ to be Son of God in this complex person.

I. The first text Mr. Gib adduces to prove that Christ is Son of God, by an eternal generation of his divine person, is *Psal. ii. 7. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

I perfectly agree with Mr. Gib, that Christ is the person spoke of in these words; and that they contain the proper doctrine of his generation. Nay, I will go a step farther, in affirming, that as they are the first, so they are the clearest declaration of this important article under the Old Testament, and so must furnish the proper key to our understanding aright the subsequent revelations given of it. It must therefore be of capital importance, to ascertain, on solid principles, the proper person here represented as God's begotten Son; the proper generation here affirmed of him, and the time when that generation and Sonship are declared to take place. Now, to ascertain accurately the just meaning of this or any other passage of scripture, these three things must be carefully attended to; 1. The general scope of the passage; 2. The natural connection and meaning of its words; and, 3. The sense in which they are explained, or understood, in other parts of the inspired writings. Let us then examine this passage by these certain rules, and we shall find the proper generation and Sonship of Christ there-
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in mentioned to be very different from what Mr. Gib represents them,

(1.) As to the general import of this psalm, many judicious interpreters have held, that it relates in some degree to the exaltation of David to be king of Israel, as typical of the manifestation of the Messiah, and his advancement to his more glorious kingdom, and that on this account it is expressed sometimes in the past, and sometimes in the future tense. But the best interpreters are all agreed, that in its chief and ultimate scope, it relates to the great Messiah, and contains a prophecy of his birth and appearance; the opposition he should receive from Jews and Gentiles, and his advancement, notwithstanding, to be Lord of the church and world. The Person who is here described in this Psalm as Son of God, is, in the introduction to it, called משיח, his Messiah, ver. 2. To him the apostles applied it, Acts iv. 25, 26. as a prophecy of God, who by the mouth of his servant David had said, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Christ: for of a truth, against thy holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council determined before to be done." Mr. Gib is obliged to acknowledge, that this psalm is chiefly prophetical, because he could not deny it: but sensible, that if he allowed it to be wholly prophetical, so far as it regarded the Son of God Messiah, it would overturn his explication of Christ's Sonship, he, in opposition to the general scope of the psalm, and the application of it by the apostles, affirms that it was not so prophetical as to be a mere prophecy

phety, which when relating to the same person, is at least a solecism in language, if not an absurdity. And then to help himself out of this difficulty, he erroneously affirms, that the second person of the Trinity was then "the Lord's anointed, the Christ, as he was then the head and undertaking surety of the new covenant." Does not Mr. Gib yet know, that Messiah signifies one actually anointed of God to be the Saviour of the world? Does he not know, that the oil of gladness with which Christ was to be anointed above his fellows is the Holy Spirit without measure? Does he not know, that Christ received this divine Spirit, and only could receive him, in his human nature, or in his mediatorial person, which includes his human nature? Does he not see, that this same person, who is here foretold as Messiah, is evidently represented as the Son of God, begotten of God, anointed with his Spirit, and set on his holy hill of Zion, at the time predicted? Which all clearly limit the generation of the Son of God to the incarnation and manifestation of Christ. As the psalm then shows that the character Messiah applies to the Second Person of the Godhead when incarnate, and only as incarnate, so must the generation and Sonship, which, as he is the promised Messiah, are there affirmed of him. But to avoid this convincing evidence, Mr. Gib must confound the decree appointing the Eternal Word to become the Son of God, with the execution of that decree in time. As well might he have said, that because all things were ordained before the foundation of the world, all things were created too before it: or as it was decreed from eternity, that the Second Person in the Godhead should become Immanuel, God-man, and in this complex person should discharge every office of Mediator, that he actually did so from the same eternity. It is evident, therefore, that the
second

second psalm, so far as it relates to the person and offices of Christ as Messiah, is wholly prophetical. As the divine Word, he then existed and acted as the other persons of the Godhead, in the government of Israel, and of the world: He was to be looked for, and trusted in, for salvation as the promised Saviour: But in the character of Messiah he was not actually to exist till his incarnation, and therefore then, and then only, was the generation here predicted of him to take place, and he to assume the relation and character of the Son of God.

(2.) What the general scope of the psalm so clearly imports, every part of it, and particularly the text quoted, taken in its most natural connection and meaning, clearly confirms. This Son of God, the Messiah, is represented to be set on God's holy hill of Zion. This applies well to the divine Word incarnate; but who will say the Second Person of the Trinity was made a king, or king over the church, merely by appointment of the First Person, when the whole world was created by him, and he had every natural right of dominion over every part of it equally with the Father? The ground-work of the whole constitution is laid in a divine decree, and the primary part of it is the generation of this glorious person the Son of God. "I will declare the decree, The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." This, in the most natural and just sense of the words, applies to Christ's mediatorial Person, or to the incarnation of the eternal Word which was the result of the divine decree: but God forbid that any should ever build the subsistence of his divine Person on any decree or arbitrary will or appointment of God whatever. This were giving up his Supreme Divinity, and were the very essence of Arianism.

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This generation is affirmed to take place *this day*, that is in some period of time; for day is a part of time, and in scripture, *to day* is uniformly used to represent some part of time, never once to express eternity. Besides, it is said to be *this day*, even at that particular important æra of time fixed on in the divine counsels, when the Son of God should be brought forth, and his unction as Messiah, and enthronement as King of Zion, are predicted to take place. Well does this agree with the generation and birth of Christ, who, as the apostle tells us, "was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times," 1 Pet. i. 20. And to it the angel might allude, or at least uses the very same words, when he announced the birth of Christ, "To you is born *this day*, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, Luke ii. 11." But what an abuse is it of language, to make a day in this place to signify eternity, which, in its natural meaning, and its common usage in scripture, expresses only time; or how contrary is it to every rule of rightly interpreting scripture, to refer one part of this general prophecy of Messiah to eternity, when every other part of it, and this in the very middle of them, relate clearly to time? In the following verse, this begotten Son of God is represented as asking of his Father, and the Father in answer to his request, as giving him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Well does this agree to the Son of God, Messiah, in his first and humble estate, in which he appeared as our Saviour; and having procured the salvation of our world, was raised to be the special Lord of it by his future exaltation. But who can conceive of the Second Person in the Godhead, as asking of the First Person, that he would give him the heathen for his inheritance,

and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, when yet in that divine character he is the conjunct Creator, Proprietor and Lord, with him, not only of these, but of the whole universe? In short, no passage of scripture is of more natural and easy interpretation in the sense of our Saviour's sonship we have given; and perhaps none was ever more tortured and perverted, to make it apply to the explication of it which Gib and others have received.

(3.) Let us consult the applications that are made of this text to our blessed Saviour under the New Testament, and we shall find, that every time it is quoted, it is quoted as holding forth the generation of the Son of God to consist in the incarnation of the divine Word in time, not in a generation of that Divine Person from eternity. Three times is this verse quoted by the apostle Paul, whom all will acknowledge to be a better interpreter of it than Mr Gib, or any man whatever, since the days of the apostles; and in every one of them the generation of the Son of God is determined, as I have explained it, to the incarnation of the divine Logos, and his appearance as Messiah or Saviour, in the fulness of time.

The first time it is quoted is in *Acts* xiii. 32, 33. "And we declare unto you glad tidings, (says the apostle,) how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus," as it should have been rendered; as it is also written in the second psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

This quotation Mr. Gib affirms to relate to the resurrection of Christ; but if he will learn not to take things on trust, but carefully to examine them before he pronounces on them, he will find that this passage of the second psalm is quoted by

by the apostle, not in reference to Christ's resurrection, but to his incarnation and appearance in the flesh. The word *αναστησας*, according to its strict etymology, signifies to raise again, and this hath misled translators and interpreters to understand it here of Christ's resurrection. But in the common use of it, by Greek writers it signifies simply to raise up, and in scripture is used to express the raising up or appointing prophets or saviours for the benefit of mankind. Thus it is said in this very book, chap. iii. 22 "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up (*αναστησει*) unto you of your brethren, like unto me." And, ver. 26. Peter affirms this promise to be fulfilled in the coming of Christ to the Jews, "Unto you first, God having raised up (*αναστησας*) his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you;" in both which, the raising here mentioned, relates to the first manifestation of Christ in the flesh. Christ is said to be raised up as Messiah in two senses; first, When he was born and appeared in the world in his state of humiliation; and, secondly, When he was raised from the dead, to enter on his glory. In both these senses does Paul in this chapter affirm him to be raised up as our Saviour. Of this man's seed, says he, hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour Jesus; which, as the following verses demonstrate, relates to his incarnation and offices on earth. When this his first estate was accomplished, the apostle tells us, God raised him from the dead; which is his second raising. The word *εγερει* is used in both, but the words *ex vivis*, from the dead, mark the distinction. In like manner, in the passage under consideration, these two raisings up of Christ are again mentioned, and mentioned as having been formerly predicted, and now accomplished. The first raising of Christ, viz. in his incarnation, is mentioned in

the 33d verse; and these words of the second psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," are quoted by the apostle as a promise or prediction of it. His resurrection or second raising, is plainly repeated in the 24th and 35th verses, and is distinguished from his first raising, by the words *ex vixis*, *from the dead*, being added to it as before, and by different passages of scripture being quoted as predictions of it. From all which it is evident, if the authority of the apostle Paul is decisive, that the generation of the Son of God, mentioned in the second psalm, is not a declaration of a character which he had as God from eternity, as the Athanasians held, nor a prediction that he was to become Son of God by his resurrection to divine glory, as the Socinians maintain; but a promise of the incarnation of the second person of the Godhead, in the fulness of time. The generation here spoke of is the incarnation of the Eternal Word; the Son here foretold, is the God-man Messiah; and the day which has been perverted to denote eternity, is just that auspicious æra of time in which, by the decrees of God, the glorious Messiah was to be begotten, and appear for our salvation.

The second instance in which this text is quoted, is in *Heb* i. 5. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee: and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" Here the apostle plainly speaks of Christ as the Second Person of the Godhead incarnate. For thro' the whole chapter his divinity and humanity are connected. In preference to angels, he is said in the preceding context to be God's begotten Son; his mediatorial person, including a divine, as well as a human nature, and these united by a divine generation. The second psalm is again adduced by

by the apostle, from the Jewish writings, and applied to the production of this glorious personage, who had now been begotten and appeared in the world, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." And farther, to show that this generation respects not the eternal begetting of his divine person into subsistence in the God-head, as Mr. Gib teaches, but the begetting of the glorious Immanuel, by the union of this divine eternal person with human nature in the fulness of time, this text is again quoted as a promise of this great event; and so another promise thereof is immediately connected with it, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." And when this Eternal Word is thus begotten, and brought into the world, first at his incarnation on earth, and then at his exaltation to heaven, the angels of God are commanded still to worship him; implying, that as they had before worshipped him as a person in the three-one Jehovah, so they were now also to worship him as that person incarnate, God's begotten Son.

The third time this noted text is quoted, is with the same obvious application to Christ as Immanuel. It is in *Heb. v. 5. 6.* "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said to him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;" as he saith also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Here the very same person who is affirmed to be begotten by God, and was to be Son of God, is affirmed to be made an high priest: and as both these characters had been predicted of Messiah in ancient prophecy, so the apostle declares that both are now fulfilled in Christ Jesus. Mr. Gib is sensible of the force of this argument, and how entirely it overthrows his explication of Christ's

Sonship. To maintain therefore the eternity of Christ's Sonship, he is obliged again to confound the decrees of God with the execution of them, and maintain too that Christ was from eternity a priest. If Mr. Gib were to mean that Christ was ordained from eternity to be Son of God, and our great high priest he were right; but if he means, as he certainly does, that he was actually called to this office, and discharged it from eternity, in the manner the apostle is representing, let him consult more accurately this epistle, and every part of it will tell him, that he is egregiously wrong: Throughout the whole of it Paul shows, that Christ is our High Priest only as he is God-man: Thus he tells us, "that he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one, that is of one nature; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Chap. ii. 11. "That every high priest is taken from among men, and is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices," ch. v. 1.; and that he must not only be thus qualified for, but called to his office, ver. 4. and then he shows, ver. 5. that according to every rule observed in the typical priests, Christ was at once qualified for, and called to this high office of priesthood, when that prediction of his generation as Son of God and of his character as Messiah, contained in the second psalm, was accomplished, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

He was to be a priest too after the order of Melchisedec, having no sacerdotal father or mother; by descent from whom he might, like the Jewish priests, be entitled to the priest-hood; for in this sense only was Melchisedec without father or mother: He was to be without beginning of days or end of time; that is, without any predecessor or successor in his priestly office; for in this sense only

ly are these words applied to Melchisedec as the type of Christ, in this sense only can they apply to him, and therefore in this sense are they here applied to Christ as the illustrious antitype. To shew that Christ should be a priest, not only according to the order of Melchisedec, but should appear posterior to him and the Jewish priests, as the antitype must naturally come after the type, the apostle tells us, that another priest should arise after these typical priests. Chap. vii. 15.

This glorious high priest he tells us was to be made, not like the typical ones, without an oath, but by the solemnity of an oath, as was foretold Psal. cx. 1. : And to shew us that this oath was neither from eternity nor from the beginning of the world, but from the time this Son of God and High Priest was born into the world, and consecrated to his office, Paul tells us that this oath consecrating him was *since the law*, Chap. vii. 28. " And that now once in the end of the world, he " hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice " of himself, Chap. ix. 26. It is evident then, from the whole of this epistle, that though Christ was foreordained to be High Priest from eternity, yet he only was called to this office at his incarnation; and as he is High Priest and Son of God in the same incarnate and mediatorial person, that he became the Son of God at the same period.

Thus I have shewed, I think, to the full conviction of every discerning and impartial person, from the design of the psalm, from the natural connection and meaning of its words, and from every quotation that is made of it in the New Testament, that the generation of the Son of God mentioned in the second psalm is a prediction of, and relates wholly to the incarnation of the Second Person in the Godhead; and that in place of proving him to be Son of God as he is God only,

ly, or by an eternal generation of his divine person, as many have imagined, it affords a direct and irrefragable proof, that this generation of the Son of God is the incarnation of his co-eternal Word; and that this Word incarnate, and only by being incarnate by a divine generation, is held forth in scripture as the Son of God. Nay, as the explication I have given of this important text brings some of the clearest revelations of God in both Testaments in connection with it, I will say, that even by itself it affords much stronger evidence of my explication of the Sonship, than all the arguments that ever were brought, or ever can be brought, from scripture to the contrary.

II. The second text Mr. Gib brings to prove the generation of Christ's divine person, is *Psal. ii. 20. Kiss ye the Son, lest he be angry.*

The argument here cannot be taken from the character *Son*, for that would make it the same argument with the former, but from the duty which mankind are here enjoined to pay to him. Mr. Gib thinks the exhortation here given expresses a duty then to be performed, and so implies, that, as Son of God, Christ did then actually exist. But this reason is as illogical, upon the principles of scripture-prophecy, as the terms, in which Mr. Gib represents the opposite explication of the Sonship, are illiberal. As well might Mr. Gib infer from the prophetic exhortation, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, thy King cometh unto thee, &c." that Christ as God-man, the King Messiah, then actually existed: or from the prophetic declaration, that "by the blood of God's covenant with Christ, he had sent forth the prisoners out of the pit;" and the exhortation thereupon, "to turn to the strong hold as prisoners of hope," that the Mediator of this covenant

covenant then existed as God-man, and had shed his blood for our redemption, *Zech. ix. 9, 11, 12.* The design of every prophecy of the Son of God, the Messiah, recorded in scripture, was two-fold; first, to direct the faith and hopes of the Old Testament saints to him for salvation, till he came; and then to confirm our faith in him, and our dutiful regards to him, now that he is come. Like the two cherubims placed on the two ends of the mercy-seat, which looked towards each other, and both upon the mercy-seat, which was typical of Christ; so the saints under the Old Testament looked forward to Christ promised and prefigured; and we Christians look backward to him exhibited in the flesh, and upward to him, as exalted to his throne. Thus Abraham saw Christ's day, and rejoiced to see it, yet still he saw it as afar off. The character in which mankind have ever been directed to look to Christ for salvation, is as he is the Saviour: and this character of Saviour he has not as God only, but as God-man. The duty enjoined therefore towards the Son of God, might apply to mankind, both *then*, and especially when Christ was actually exhibited; but, in both, he must be regarded as God-man the Saviour, as the whole psalm had represented him: so that this, as the other parts of the psalm, holds forth the Son of God to be God-man the Messiah. Mr. Gib's conclusion therefore, from these premises, that because the Jews were then enjoined to honour the Son of God, that he then was the Son, is false. His addition, that he was so from everlasting, is again a conclusion of Mr. Gib's own, without premises at all: and, what is worse, it is a conclusion, directly contrary to the whole tenor of the psalm, and the apostolic explications of it, as we have clearly demonstrated under the last argument.

III. Mr. Gib's third scripture, to prove the eternal generation of Christ's divine person, is *Psal. xlv. 6. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*; compared with *Heb. i. 8. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."*

It is a pity, when divines consult the scriptures with a view to ascertain their just meaning, that they do not consider the general passage, its scope, and the connection of its parts; and that, when they quote any passage in proof of their doctrines, they do not quote the whole of what relates to the point in question. The first is often a loss to themselves: the second is no less a loss to their disciples; for both are in utmost danger of coming short of the truth. This is the case with Mr. Gib in the passage before us. Had he been so careful as to have considered the xlvth Psalm at large, he would have found, with almost every interpreter, Jewish and Christian, that it relates throughout to Messiah, and contains a prophetic description of his whole mediatorial person: Or had he been so candid as to quote the whole passage which the apostle quotes, when he applies it to Christ, his readers would have seen, that according to that apostle, the character Son of God, includes not only Christ's divine, but his human nature. "To the Son God saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom; thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." This whole passage was predicted by the psalmist of Messiah; and the same whole passage is by the apostle applied to the Son of God. The first part of it declares his divinity; the subsequent parts as clearly demonstrate his humanity: for will any man, who believes a Trinity of co-essential and co-equal Persons

sons in the same Godhead, say, that the First Person in the Trinity is the God of the Second, who is essentially one, and personally equal with him? Will any man say, that the Second person in the Godhead was anointed by the First with the oil of gladness? Will any man of common knowledge in Christianity, and in his right judgment, say, that the Divine Eternal Word, whom God, the First Person, affirms also to be God, is fellow, in that divine person alone, to those human prophets, priests, and kings, who had been anointed by God as types of his Messiah, and with which he is here compared? If ever Mr. Gib's exclamations of blasphemy, absurdity, &c. so often introduced in his sermon, to help out his arguments, were to be introduced in subjects of strict reasoning, it would be with the utmost propriety against himself, on this occasion; for no Arian ever degraded the Saviour's divinity lower, than Mr. Gib must do, to make these characters, by which the apostle describes the Son of God, apply to him as he is God only: And if both the psalmist and the apostle describe the Son God, in terms that clearly include his whole complex person as God-man, what authority has Mr. Gib to put asunder what God and his inspired servants have so manifestly conjoined, and to restrict the Saviour's Sonship to his one nature, when they so plainly show him it includes both? Mr. Gib's mention of Christ as having then a throne, if rightly considered, is impertinent to this point; and, as explained by Mr. Gib, is absolutely false. The throne on which Christ appeared to Isaiah, chap. vi. 1. was not the throne of Christ as Mediator, but of the Three-one Jehovah in general, as that passage intimates, and the writers of the New Testament do testify.

But the throne to which the psalmist prophesies, and the apostle here affirms Christ as Son of God

to

to be advanced, is that which he now possesses as Mediator. It is therefore said to be conferred upon him in this his mediatorial person, in reward of his most meritorious services for the honour of God and the happiness of his creatures, and, in consequence of this he is here affirmed in that person to be advanced above the whole creation. The authority therefore of a prophet and an apostle here again stand in opposition to the doctrine of Mr. Gib, in showing, that Christ is Son of God as he is God-man the Messiah; and consequently, that his generation does not apply to the production of his divine person from eternity, but to his incarnation at the appointed time, as the tenor of the psalm indicates, and the reasoning of the apostle in this place in which he quotes it clearly demonstrates.

IV. Mr. Gib's fourth argument for the generation of our Saviour's divine person, is taken from Prov. viii. 24, 25. *When there were no depths, I was brought forth.—Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth.*

This passage has been often quoted as a proof of Christ's eternal generation as second person of the Godhead, but with how little propriety, will be obvious to every impartial man, from these two considerations, (1.) That we have no certain evidence that it relates to Christ at all; and, (2.) If it could be showed that it does relate to him, yet it would not be any proof of this doctrine, but rather of the contrary.

1st, I say we have no certain evidence that this passage relates to Christ at all. The best way, we have said, to ascertain the true sense of any passage of scripture, is to attend carefully to the general scope of the book or passage, the natural and determined meaning of the words, the parallel passages that confirm their meaning, or the quotations

tions made of them by other inspired writers. Now, let any man examine this text by all these rules, and he will find no solid reason for believing that these words do relate to the second person in the Godhead. Do we attend to the general intention and scope of the book, Solomon tells us, in the introduction, it is "to know wisdom, to perceive the words of understanding," chap. i. 2. Do we consider the determined meaning he affixes to wisdom, and the synonymous words he uses to define or explain it, they are understanding, knowledge, prudence, and particularly, the fear of the Lord; all which represent wisdom, not as a person, but as the knowledge and practice of universal goodness. This wisdom is indeed represented as a person crying without, and uttering her voice in the streets. But such personification is common to Solomon, with ancient and modern writers; particularly when wisdom, as an assemblage of every excellence, is recommended: She says, "Turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit (or breath) unto you," for the word רוח signifies both spirit and breath: and wisdom is represented in the foregoing context as crying aloud, and in the immediately following clause it is said, as the natural effect of pouring forth her breath, "I will make known my words to you." Or if by wisdom we understand God, who is the fountain of all wisdom, then the word may well be rendered, as in our translation, Spirit.

Do we consider the parallel passages in which this noble principle is more fully explained, we have one chap. iii. from the 11th to the 20th verse, where the excellence of wisdom is described, and she is represented both as the finishing character of man and great source of his happiness; and as an essential perfection of the all-perfect and blessed God himself, and the grand designing and directing

directing principle in his creation and establishment of this vast universe. In the same order, and often in the very same words, is wisdom described in this eighth chapter; which shows, that it is only an enlargement of what was more briefly taught in chap. iii. and must therefore be understood in the same sense, namely, as an essential character of every perfect rational being, and the grand principle of every design and action. Thus from the 12th to the 21st verse, wisdom, as applicable to man, is described and recommended; and many characters are applied to it which will not apply to divine wisdom, whether considered as a personal or essential character. From the 22d verse, Solomon rises again from wisdom, as it exists in creatures, to wisdom as essential to God the Creator. To show that it is not any person in the Godhead, but that wisdom which belongs to the Deity in general, the same wisdom, which in a finite degree had been applied to man, is in its infinite perfection applied to God. It is represented as *possessed* by him, not as created or begotten, but as co-essential and co-eternal with him, possessed by him in the beginning of his ways, when the three-one Jehovah, designed in his eternal mind the great plan of the universe; or the beginning of his ways, as both the word ראשית in the original, and ἀρχή in the Septuagint signify, that is, the divine principle and rule by which all his ways, both in his decrees, and in the execution of them, were conducted. Agreeably to the personification and personal description of wisdom given us through the whole of this chapter, and other parts of this book, wisdom is represented as set up from everlasting, or from the beginning of the world, as the words are explained, and as brought forth ver. 24, 25. and to be his delight, ver. 30. though the whole face of the chapter shows that

that it was only the perfection of the divine mind brought forth into exercise, in designing all things before the foundation of the world; and, according to that most perfect design, directing their creation; and rejoicing when this world, and men, its rational inhabitants, were created; just as mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, under the character of persons, are represented as meeting and embracing each other, upon the redemption of man by the mediation of Christ, *Psal.* lxxxv. 10.

What the general tenour of this whole book and chapter indicates, the subsequent inspired writings confirm. The prophet Jeremiah seems twice to refer to these words of Solomon, but understands *wisdom* not of a person in the Godhead, but in the sense we have given of it. "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion," *Jer.* x. 12. and li.

15. But among the numerous passages which are cited from the Old Testament, in proof of Christ's eternity and divinity as God, or of his generation and office as the Son of God, Messiah, not the least quotation is made from this chapter by Christ himself, by apostle or evangelist, with application to our Saviour. This we might naturally have expected, had wisdom here related to Christ, and contained so many glorious characters of him, as after-ages have imagined. But as there is no such application made of these verses, we have reason to believe they do not apply; and to conclude, as the learned and judicious commentator Bishop Patrick does, that however divines may have applied these passages to the eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father, "Yet Solomon thought of nothing but the wise directions God had given them, in his word revealed to them by his servant Moses, and the prophets."

But, 2d. If contrary to every rule of accurate interpretation we should suppose these verses to relate to Christ, they will furnish a proof of his divinity and eternal existence, which was the great motive that induced so many thus to apply them; but they afford no evidence of his being a generated divine person, or that he is Son of God in that sense, but much the contrary. He is not here called the Son, but the Wisdom of God; and so being described from an essential perfection of the Deity, he must be signified not to hold his subsistence in the Godhead by generation, but to be alike essential and necessarily existent in it as itself or its essential perfections are. He is not said to be begotten, but, like God's essential wisdom, to be possessed by him as a person co-existing with God in the same essence, though personally distinguished from him. His being represented as possessed by God in the beginning of his ways, may denote his co-existence with God in the same eternal Deity, when this universe was designed in his mind before all worlds, or brought into existence at the beginning of time. Accordingly John tells us, that the Logos, which signifies the Reason or Wisdom, as well as the Word, was in the beginning with God, and was God, *John i. 1.* Or should we consider the co-essential, co-eternal Wisdom as the *beginning* of God's ways, as the words strictly import, this would show, that Christ was not only a person of infinite wisdom, and one in essence with God, but that with him his whole immense designs were formed and executed. His being set up from everlasting or the beginning, may signify, that he was ordained to be, in special manner, the Creator of all things, as John affirms the Word was, *John i. 3.* and the Head and Saviour of his church, and Ruler of the universe. His being brought forth, mentioned ver. 24, 25. cannot signify

nify that he was begotten, or brought in existence, as Mr. Gib would have it understood; for his existence had been mentioned first of all, ver. 22. and been signified to be co-eternal and necessarily existent, as Jehovah who possessed him; but must signify his being brought forth into action as the special Creator of all things. His rejoicing before God *day by day*, may denote the divine satisfaction they mutually felt in the bringing beings into existence that were not before: And his delights were particularly with the *sons of men*, who were created in his image, and whose nature, when fallen, he had graciously agreed to assume, that he might procure our redemption. Thus will these words apply to Christ. Upon these general principles it is, that many pious writers have thus applied them. Yet when accurately explained and applied upon these principles, they afford not the smallest evidence of Christ's being a divine Person existing by generation; but, on the contrary, that he exists in the divine essence as God's personal wisdom, by the same necessary existence that wisdom as an essential perfection exists in it.

Thus, whether we explain the *wisdom* here spoke of, on principles of strict interpretation, as signifying an essential perfection in God; or on principles of general accommodation only, as denoting the Second Person in the Godhead; in place of being begotten, it appears to be essential to, and of the same necessary existence as the Deity it belongs to, and so furnishes a proof, not of Mr. Gib's doctrine, but of mine.

V. Mr. Gib's fifth argument to prove Christ's eternal generation, is taken from Prov. xxx. 4. *Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath esta-*

blissed all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

There is not perhaps a greater instance of the inattention and inaccuracy of divines, than their having quoted these words as a proof of the eternal Sonship and generation of Christ. The words mentioned were spoken by Agur to Ithiel and Ucal, who are generally believed to have been scholars of Agur. However that was, they now consulted him on sublime subjects relating to the works of God. Agur acknowledges his inability fully to answer these questions, modestly saying to them, "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man: I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy." At the 4th verse, he assures them, that neither he, nor any man else, could explain these sublime works of God, concerning which they had been inquiring. "For who," or what man, says he, "hath ascended up into heaven," (to know the things that are there?) "or who hath descended" (to report them?)—To speak of things nearer; "Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? or who hath bound the waters in his garment? or who hath established all the ends of the earth?" What is the man's name that hath done or can do these things? or what is the name of his son? that you should ask or expect an explanation of them?—This knowledge Agur here signifies, was too high for men and the sons of men; and therefore he, at the next verse, directs Ithiel, who had been the chief inquirer, to the word of God, as the best source of information of the origin and nature of his works we can now have.

This is the plain and natural meaning of the text. Every clause of it is interrogative, and implies

plies that the persons, of whom these questions are put, had done none of the things contained in them, nor could do them. Such interrogations are frequent in scripture, and in all writings; and always import a denial, that the things mentioned in them were done, or can be done, by the persons signified. Thus says Zophar to Job: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" strongly implying that he could not. *Job xi. 7.* "Who can bring a clean thing" says Job, "out of an unclean?" which imports, as it is added, "Not one". *Job xiv. 4.* Such are the negative interrogations put throughout the whole of this verse: They signify, that the things mentioned in them are impossible to the person specified. The person therefore which they specify cannot be God; for God had both ascended and descended; and done all the things which are here mentioned; and therefore, to say he did not do them were falsehood; or that he could not explain them, were blasphemy. Yet false and blasphemous as this interpretation is, so much has Mr. Gib's prejudice perverted, and the passion which here discovers, blinded his judgment, that he ignorantly goes into it. When Agur in these questions denies, that any man ever existed who had done the things mentioned in them; or son of that man, who could declare them, Mr. Gib absurdly understands these persons of God and his Son, and thence infers that God must then have had a Son, and that this Son must have existed from everlasting. If any persons can be weak enough to believe such sophistry upon Mr. Gib's authority, they may do so; but every man of judgment must see, that both his explication and their belief of it are in direct contradiction to the clearest meaning of this sacred passage.

VI. Mr. Gib's sixth proof of Christ's eternal generation is from Micah, chap. v. 2. *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

These words contain two things with regard to our Saviour; the one a declaration relating to him as God, before his incarnation; his goings forth were of old; and the other a prediction of his incarnation, birth, and office as God-man, viz. that he should come forth to God out of Bethlehem, and should be ruler in Israel. The first of these Mr. Gib would explain of his generation from eternity as he is God; and the second, of his generation in time as he is man; as God-man, he should have said, for Christ as man only never was either begotten or born. But if Mr. Gib will admit that the just sense of this text is to be determined from the true meaning of its words, or from the passages under the New Testament by which it is explained, or from both, he will find it to contain doctrines very different from his; but much more honourable to Christ and agreeable to his gospel. He will find these words to contain not an intimation of his generation, but of his self-existence as God from eternity: He will find an express declaration of his goings forth or actings towards his creatures from the beginning of time; and he will find a prediction of his generation and birth as Son of God and King of Israel, when he was to be born in Bethlehem. This will be evident from these following observations:

(1.) The word מוצאתיו *his goings forth* does not properly signify a generation of Christ's divine person, but his actings. Generation is a single act; as between the existence and non-existence of a person there can be no medium; and so the coming

ming forth of Christ at his birth, is represented as one ; but the word here used is plural, and so expresses not the begetting of a divine person, but the actings of that divine person who is self-existent and eternal. Mr. Gib was sensible of this objection to which his argument was liable, and endeavours to obviate it by saying that God's mercy is called *the multitude of his mercies*, Psal. li. 1. and his Spirit, *seven spirits*, Rev. v. 6. But these, in place of solving his difficulty, resolve it directly against him. The multitude of God's mercies does not there signify immediately mercy, as a perfection of God, but the many exertions or expressions of it in the purification, pardon, and consolation of David after-mentioned. The seven spirits denote not immediately the divine Spirit, who is one ; but his powers, operations, and gifts, which are many. In like manner, the *goings forth* of the second person in the Godhead must relate not to the existence, but to the operations or actings of the person existing. What farther confirms this, is the general use of the word in scripture. *Going forth* supposes the existence of any being, and expresses its action or manifestation. Thus the *going forth* of God is said to be prepared as the morning, *Hos. vi. 3.* Thus the bridegroom *goes out* of his chamber ; and the sun-rise is represented as his *going forth*, Psal. xix. 5, 6. And thus the birth of Christ in Berthelem, and his appearance as Ruler in Israel, after his mediatorial person was begotten or formed in the womb of his Virgin Mother, is represented as his coming forth. The *goings forth* therefore of Christ's divine person must suppose his pre-existence in the Godhead, and must denote his outgoings, as God's co-essential Word towards his people ; in like manner as his *coming forth to God*, and to be king of Israel denotes his future appearance as God-man, the Son of God, and Saviour of the

the world. And what confirms this is, that in the very next words, he declares, that he would give Israel up, or cease these his goings forth in their behalf, till the promise of his appearance as Son of God, and King of Israel should be fulfilled.

(2.) What demonstrates this, is the time when these his *goings forth* are expressly affirmed to take place. **מקדם** signifies in general *from of old*; and, according to the nature of its object, denotes a past duration, that is either infinite or finite. When applied to God's existence, *Hab. i. 12.* it justly signifies *from eternity*. When applied to his operations and works, it signifies from the beginning, or first origin of the world. *Prov. viii. 23.* The goings forth of this divine person in his external actings towards his creatures, plainly determines it to this temporal antiquity. But what puts this matter beyond all reasonable dispute is, that the phrase immediately subjoined in explication of that word, expressly limits it to time. **ממנו ימי עולם** signifies *from the days of the world*, from the time that duration became distinguished by days, which was from the creation. This phrase often occurs throughout the Old Testament, and is always used in this its natural and proper sense, as expressive of time, and particularly of the time of God's appearance in behalf of his church. Moses explains it of the ancient times, when the Most High divided to the nations and to Israel their inheritance, *Deut. xxxii. 7. 8.* In *Ezra iv. 15.* it expresses the ancient contests between the Jews and the neighbouring nations. Isaiah uses it to signify God's care of Israel from the days of old, when he brought them out of Egypt, *Isa. lxiii. 9, 11.* This prophet Micah uses it a second time to express God's feeding his people Israel, *as in the days of old*, *Mic. vii. 14.* And Malachi not only joins with the preceeding prophets in shewing us, that this phrase always expresses time, but that the

the former word here used, is also used to express the ancient ages of time. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, כִּי־מִי עוֹלָם וּבִשְׁנֵי קִדְמוֹת, *as in the days of old, and as in former years*, Malac. iii. 4. This phrase then, that determines the goings forth of Christ's divine person, is always used in scripture to express time, never in one instance, that I can find, to signify eternity. The whole clause therefore is justly rendered in the Greek translation, ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἕξ ἡμερῶν αἰῶνος, from the beginning, from the days of the world. It is understood in this sense in the Chaldee paraphrase, and ought to have been so rendered in ours, and in every other version.

(3.) What farther demonstrates that this declaration of Christ's divine person relates not to his generation as the Son of God, but to his actings as the divine self-existent Word is, that his generation and birth as the Son of God are signified in the prediction here given of his appearance as God-man, Messiah. The generation of Christ as Son of God, held forth in scripture, is but one, and can be but one; and this generation and birth are plainly intimated in this prophecy, and expressly declared in the future explications given of it. Thus to come forth signifies in scripture to be born. *Gen. xxv. 25, 26. Isa. xi. 1.* To come forth out of Bethlehem signifies to be born there: and so the Jews understood it. *Matth. ii. 4. John vii. 42.* But farther, the prediction is not merely that he should come forth or be born as a Son, but says God, לִי יָצֵא *to me shall he come forth*, he shall be born in a special relation to me; as to his person he shall be my Son, and as to his office, he shall be Ruler in Israel. Thus the angel who announced Messiah's conception and birth clearly explains it. In allusion to this and to the 4th verse, which foretells

foretells Christ should be great, he says to the blessed virgin, "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus; *He shall be great*, and shall be called *the Son of the Highest*; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." *Luke i. 31,—33.* And he declares at his birth, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." *Ch. ii. 11.* Accordingly the other prophets foretold the Son of God and King of Zion to be the very same person. The Jews expected them to be the same. Christ and his apostles affirmed them to be the same, clearly teaching us, that when the Second Person in the Godhead assumed our nature into union with his divine Person, by the power of God, in the virgin's womb, and was born God-man Messiah; he at once came forth as the Son of God and Ruler of Israel.

Such then is the proper import of this text. It implies the existence of Christ's divine Person at the beginning, and so from all eternity. It affirms his actings towards the church and world from their first commencement. And it contains a prediction of his coming forth or being born to God as his Son, and to Israel as his Ruler, as the angel assures us; and therefore in place of being a proof of the eternal generation, it is a proof of the eternal self-existence of Christ's divine Person; and that this eternal divine Person became Son of God in his incarnation and birth at the time predicted.

From this prediction of Christ's generation, birth, and appearance as God-man, the Son of God and King of Israel, no argument can be drawn in proof of his eternal generation as God, but the very reverse. The generation of Christ as Son of God is uniformly represented in scripture to be but one. This prophecy and the express applications of it

to the birth of Christ as Son of God, demonstrate that his coming forth to God out of Bethlehem relate to his generation as Son of God, and predict that generation to be future. The goings forth therefore of his divine person cannot denote his generation and Sonship in that divine personality, but the whole analogy between his former and latter going forth, relates to his existence and actions towards his creatures. As the eternal God, he had gone forth in many acts of beneficence to his people from the first ages of the world and church; and as God-man, he is here foretold to come out of Bethlehem the Son of God and Ruler in Israel.

VII. Mr. Gib's 7th argument to prove the generation of Christ's divine Person, is, *John v. 18. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God; compared with John x. 33, 36. For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.—Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?*

These texts, and the passages from which they are taken, contain such a clear and ample proof that Christ is Son of God as he is God-man; that it is truly amazing that they ever have been brought to prove that he is Son of God in any other sense.

In the first of these passages we are told, that Christ having cured a lame man on the Sabbath, the malicious Jews sought to slay him: Jesus answered them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The Jews therefore sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father;

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πατερ αὐτον, his *proper Father*, by a communication with him of the same divine nature, thus making himself equal with God. This just inference of theirs Jesus did not deny, but tacitely admits. But though he admits that as Second Person in the Godhead he was equal to God, yet in that visible complex Person as God-man, in which he now appeared, and called God his Father, and himself the Son of God, he takes care to inform them, that he was also in many respects inferior and subordinate to the Father.—“The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do.—“The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth; and he will shew him greater works than these.—For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.—The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men might honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” Ver. 19.—23. Such are the characters, both personal and official, by which our Saviour describes himself as the Son of God. But to what nature in his complex Person will they properly apply? Can we say of the divine almighty Word alone, that he can do nothing of himself? Can we say of the Omniscient Word alone, that the Father shows him all things; or that there are things which he had not then shewed him, and which the Son did not know? Can it be said of the divine Word, who gave life and being to the Universe, that he cannot restore that life to the dead? Can it be said of the Creator, that he has no natural, but only a delegated, right to judge the world which he hath made? or of a co-equal Person in the Godhead, that he has not the same natural title to divine honours from his creatures as any other Person in the co-essential Trinity? These suppositions are so big with absurdity,

furdity, that Mr. Gib, I believe, though he denies the self-subsistence of this divine Person, and would give him only a generated subsistence, will not venture to maintain them.

Shall we then, on the other hand, restrict these characters of the Son of God wholly to his human nature? Shall we believe that Christ, as he is man only, called himself the Son of God; and acknowledged himself to be the *proper* Son of God, and to be *equal with God*? Shall we believe him as man only, to have a power of raising the whole dead, and of judging the world; and a right to the same divine honours as God? Such a belief were equally absurd and impious as the former. Yet all these things does Christ here predicate of himself as he is the Son of God; and predicates them with an intention to intimate and ascertain his true filial person. The whole description therefore, which Christ here gives of himself as Son of God shews, that he possesses this character, neither as he is God only, nor man only, but as he is God and man in one Person: The whole design of Christ shews, that he is Son of God in that complex person of God-man, in which he then existed and claimed that character. To hold Christ then to be Son of God as he is God only, while yet he described himself in characters that are inferior to divinity, were to reproach him with dissingenuity to his hearers. To hold him to be Son of God, as he is man only, while yet he claimed equality with God, were to charge him not only with dissingenuity to men, but with impiety to God. But when we hold him to be Son of God, as he is both God and Man in one Person, his whole reasoning and representation of himself, as they ever must be, are consistent and true. To this his Person as God-man will all these characters, by which he here describes himself as Son of God, apply: To this Person

only will they apply; and therefore, the whole of this passage demonstrates him as God-man, and only as he is God-man, to be the Son of God.

The other passage from *chap. x. 33.* is of much the same import, and proves Christ to be Son of God in the same sense. As Jesus was walking, at the feast of Pentecost, in one of the porches of the temple, a number of the Jews came to him, and desired him to tell them plainly, whether he was the Christ. He replies, that he had told them so already, and they did not believe; yet refers them to the miracles he had wrought in his Father's name, as the proper evidence that he was the person mentioned. His appearing in that humble form, not only of a man, but of a mean man, he well knew, had all along occasioned their doubts of his being the Son of God, the glorious Messiah. He therefore tells them, "I and my Father are one," intimating that though in his visible outward Person he was a man, yet as the divine Word dwelt in him by personal union, therefore he was the Son of God, and in that divine Person he and his Father were, as to essence and every divine perfection, one. Upon this the ignorant unbelieving Jews took up stones to stone him, as thinking him guilty of blasphemy, because he, being visibly a man, made himself God, or arrogated divinity to humanity, in affirming himself to be one with God. Jesus does not think proper at that time to shew the Jews, any more than he had done his disciples, that he was both God and man, and in that complex Person the Son of God; yet he plainly hints to them, both the true ground of this high character, and the just right on which he claimed it. He reminds them, that even their rulers, to whom the word of God came, appointing them to that character, are called Gods in scripture. And, says he, "If he called them gods unto whom the word
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“ of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God.” By the *Word of God* some have here understood God’s personal Word, the divine Logos, appointing the rulers to the Jews. Others have understood it in general of a divine call and commission given them to their office. With these persons who were called Gods and Children of God, Christ here compares himself, as Son of God, and shews the infinitely superior title he has to that glorious character. And in which soever of the senses we understand the first part of the comparison, it concludes with equal propriety and force in proof of my explication of our Saviour’s Sonship. If by the word of God we understand the divine co-essential Word, who in the beginning was with God, and was God, then by it Christ intimates, what his beloved disciple afterwards taught more fully in his name, that now “ the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld his glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father,” *Jo. i. 14.* But upon the most general explication of these principles laid down by our Saviour, the conclusion is the same. These persons, before their vocation to their office, were men; but after it, they were called Gods, and Children of the Most High. In like manner, Christ, in his pre-existent character, was God only; or, as he expresses it, one with that divine Person whom he now calls his Father: But being sanctified and sent into the world in his incarnation by the divine power, and his consecration by the divine Spirit, he is in this mediatorial Person, with highest propriety the Son of God; for he has not only a consecration and commission from God, similar and superior to theirs, as the words import: But which his argument also plainly

implies, he has that divine Person as the Word which makes him true God, and that complex Person as Immanuel, begotten in the union of the divine Word, with human nature by a divine generation, making him, in all propriety of language, and with the universal voice of scripture, the Son of God, his proper, his begotten Son.

Nor can it here be said, that this sanctification was from eternity, when Christ was decreed to this office. For these Jewish rulers were decreed too from eternity; yet it was not from the decree, but from the execution of it; nay, it was not from their existence as men, but from their being actually called by God to their office, that the character of Gods, and Children of God, belonged to them. Accordingly many have understood *Psal. ii. 7.* of David's inunction and vocation to be King of Israel, as typical of the true Messiah and Son of God, who should be begotten at his incarnation and appearance as our Saviour. Wherefore to render our Saviour's reasoning just, it is not from his being decreed to his mediatorial Person and offices as God-man Messiah; but it is from his actual entrance on them, that his character as Son of God really commences. From this our Saviour plainly dates it, when he derives it from his being sanctified and sent into the world at his incarnation; as the Jewish kings at their inunction and consecration were sent to Israel. And this the whole gospel-revelation confirms. When the glorious Immanuel was begotten by the power of God, and sanctified by his Spirit, in the incarnation of the divine Word, the angel declares him that holy Person *who should be called the Son of God*, Luke i. 35. When he received the divine Spirit more fully, and was sent more publicly into the world, at his baptism, then did God more publicly announce his character, *This is my beloved Son*, Matth. iii. 17. Thus Paul intimates

intimates that Christ was begotten as Son of God, when he was called, at his incarnation and inunction with the divine Spirit, to be our Great High Priest, *Heb. v. 5.* And in allusion to his incarnation and appearance on earth, he is metaphorically called the *first-begotten from the dead*, as being revived by the divine power into life, and exalted to be *Prince of the kings of the earth. Rev. i. 5.*

Such are the accounts these passages give us of the filial Person of Christ. They fully prove that the Son of God is God, equal and one with the Father; but they prove equally that he is not only God, but man; and that by becoming God-man, and only when he became God-man, he became the Son of God: so that they clearly confute the explication of this article which Mr. Gib hath brought them to confirm, and confirm the explication of it which he has brought them to confute.

VIII. Mr. Gib's eighth argument for the generation of our Saviour's divine Person is taken from John x. 30. *I and my Father are one.*

In Mr. Gib's explication of these words we have another instance, after many, of the injudiciousness and danger of explaining particular texts of scripture, without regard either to the general passage, or to the other scriptures which treat of the same subject. Our Saviour conversing with the Jews, as the Word made flesh, had in that complex Person called God his Father, and himself the Son of God. They saw him to be man; and if their eyes had not been blinded with ignorance and prejudice, they might, from the heavenly doctrines he taught, and the God-like miracles he wrought, have seen him to be God-man, the glorious Messiah, whom their prophets had foretold. To help them to this proper knowledge of him, Christ told them, that though as Son of God he was man, yet
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he was also God, or a Person in the Godhead; and that in this respect he and his Father, as to their divine essence, were one. This shews that Christ, as Son of God, had the same divine nature as the Father, dwelling in him under another personality. But when Mr. Gib goes farther, and infers from these words, that he was Son of God in this divine Person alone, abstractedly from his human nature, and that he had been so from all eternity, he infers a great deal more than the words contain. To shew the fallacy of such reasoning, let us take another declaration of our Saviour, when he says, *Jo. xiv. 28. My Father is greater than I.* According to Mr. Gib's logic, we should reason thus; Since Christ affirms that his Father is greater than he, this cannot be said of his divine person, but of his human nature, and therefore his character Son of God cannot include his divine Person, but is confined wholly to his human nature. The reasonings from both these texts are the same; and they are both false. Did our Saviour expressly limit the title Son of God to one nature in his mediatorial Person, we might justly limit it. But when he, in that person, calls himself the Son of God; when he affirms of himself as Son of God, both that he is one with the Father, and also that he is inferior to him; when he appropriates to himself, as Son of God, such personal characters as mark supreme divinity, and such also as can apply only to his humanity, what is a judicious divine and Christian in this case to do? Are we to found his sonship on his divinity abstractedly from his humanity, or on his humanity abstractedly from his divinity; and by either of these explications to make the Son of God, *the faithful and true witness*, contradict himself? No; We are to join together what God hath joined together, and what the Son of God

God and all scripture have represented as joined together, God's co-eternal, co-essential, and co-equal Word, the Second Person in the Trinity, with human nature, united by a divine supernatural generation, constituting this glorious Person, in both these natures, and by this conjunction of these natures, the Son of God. The whole passage holds forth Christ to be Son of God in this complex Person. In this Person he called God his Father. The works which he did to prove himself the Son of God he did in his Father's name, and by his power; which shews he acted in that subordinate filial character which his human nature now gave him. And the ground of his Sonship intimated, at the 36th verse, to have been laid in his incarnation and mission into the world, as God-man Messiah, demonstrates, as we have formerly shewed, that both these natures are essentially included in his Person and character as Son of God.

IX. Mr. Gib's ninth argument is taken from 1 John iv. 9, 10, 14. *God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him:— Sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins:— And the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*

These, and such expressions, Mr. Gib thinks, must imply, not only that Christ was Son before he was sent, but that he was the only-begotten Son from everlasting. But if Mr. Gib had carefully and impartially considered the meaning of this word as used in scripture, and its applications to Christ, he would have found that he became Son of God in his incarnation in the virgin's womb, and was sent into the world by his birth, and especially at his baptism. This word is used in several senses in the inspired writings, but whenever it is applied to Christ,

Christ, it is applied to him only in this sense. Sometimes it is used to express a person sent from one person or place to another. This when applied to finite beings implies loco-motion, or an actual removal and change of place. But who will apply it in this sense to the Second Person in the Godhead? He has the same individual essence with the First Person, and so can never be separated from him: He is infinite in essence, filling the immensity of space, and in strict language cannot remove from one place to another. Like the Deity in general, he is present every where; and so can only be said to go to any place, when by some visible symbol or appearance he there sensibly manifests his presence and glory. As to his human nature with his divinity united to it, he may, in proper language, be said to come from the Father and go to the Father: But as to his divine Person, that is impossible; and so these expressions can be understood only of the Word made flesh, and of his being therein born or sent into the world.

But when this word is used in scripture of Persons sent from God, it commonly signifies the investing them with an office, and giving them commission to execute it. Thus says God to the Jews, "I have *sent* unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and *sending* them." *Jer.* vii. 25. And thus governors are said to be "*sent* by him for a terror to evil doers," *1 Pet.* ii. 14. In this sense Christ himself informs us he was sent into the world. "For as my Father hath *sent* me into the world, so *send* I you into the world," *John* xx. 21.; which in both cases denotes their mission, in their respective offices. And says Paul to the Jews, "God having raised up his Son Jesus, (*viz.* as the great Prophet foretold by Moses,) *sent* him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

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Acts iii. 26.; where the *raising* clearly relates to his birth or appearance as Son of God, and his *sending* to the commission he received at his baptism to enter on his public ministry.

Such are the senses in which this word is used in the sacred writings, and in which it is applied to Christ. But do they imply that he was the Son of God in his divine Person alone, and so from eternity? By no means. The prophets were men, before they were raised up, commissioned, and sent out in that character; but from their commission only were they prophets and apostles. In like manner, Christ was God, or the divine Word, before his incarnation; but thence only did he become the Son of God, and as such was sent into the world at his birth and baptism. John Baptist is said to be a *man sent from God*, *John* i. 6.; which is one of the strongest expressions of this sort to be found in scripture; but will any man thence infer that he existed with God before he was sent into the world? As little can we infer from Christ being sent by God as his Son, that he existed with him in that character from all eternity. John was formed by God in his mother's womb, sanctified by his Spirit, and sent by God into the world at his birth, and then by his public ministry: Thus also was Christ his Lord. As the divine Word, he had existed with God in the same essence from eternity. By a divine generation or incarnation of him in the virgin's womb, he of God became God man; and he that was the Word of God in his divine, became also the Son of God in his complex, Person. He existed in the womb during the proper period. He came into the world by his birth, as this same Evangelist tells us all men do. *John* i. 9. And having come into the world at his birth, he was sent in his public character about thirty years thereafter at his baptism, when by a
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fuller communication of the Holy Spirit, he was called to the public discharge of his high office; on which account chiefly, like the prophets that were typical of him, he is said to be sent into the world. In this complex person and mediatory character, was he foretold to be sent. Thus Messiah is prophetically represented as saying, "The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me." *Isa. xlviii. 16.* "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach glad tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted." *Isa. lxi. 1.* which clearly relate to his Person as Immanuel. In this complex Person he is affirmed to be sent, and so is uniformly held forth, as the Son of God. Thus, is God said to send forth his Son; it is immediately added, that this Son was "made (or born) of a woman." *Gal. iv. 4.* Is he said to bring his first-begotten into the world, *Heb. i. 6.* it is added, that he then enjoined all the angels to worship him; implying that this Son was the Word incarnate, and born into the world; and his Son only as incarnate; for as the Word all things and the angels were made by him; he was in the world, and was worshipped from the beginning; but now that he is brought into the world in another character, they are directed to give him the same worship as God-man, God's begotten Son, which they had given him as God. John had taught, both in the beginning of his gospel, and of this epistle; that Christ became the Son of God, when the eternal Word was made flesh, and appeared in the world. Accordingly every sentence of this Apostle, which Mr. Gib here adduces to prove Christ to be sent in his divine, shews him to be sent in his complex Person. Thus, says he, "God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, *that we might live through him—that he might be the propitiation*"
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“for our sins—and to be the Saviour of the world;” all which clearly describe him in his complex Person, and so demonstrate him in that Person to be the Son of God.

MR. GIB subjoins to this argument these words of the apostle, *Heb. i. 1.* where, speaking of the Son of God, he says, that *by him God made the worlds.* From this Mr. Gib would infer that he was actually Son of God when the worlds were created by him: But by the same reasoning, might he infer from that other passage of the same apostle, *God created all things by Jesus Christ, Eph. iii. 9.* that he was actually *Jesus Christ*, or the Second Person of the Godhead incarnate, born of a Virgin, and sent as the Messiah, when he created all things. The truth is, that the Person of the Son of God comprehends the divine Word, by whom all things were created, and a human nature, making him in this Complex Person the Son of God and Saviour of the world; and so whatever was done by him before his incarnation or after it, is ascribed to his general Person as the Son. And if Mr. Gib had considered this chapter with proper attention, he would have found the whole of it a demonstration, that in this his Person as God man, and in this Person only, is Jesus Christ the Son of God.

X. The last passage of scripture which Mr. Gib hath brought to prove the subsistence of the Second Person in the Godhead by generation, is, *1 John v. 7. There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

It is an evidence either of a bad cause, or of a bad casuist, when the arguments which he adduces, in place of confirming his doctrine, clearly confute it. Of this we have had many instances in Mr. Gib's former arguments, and we have now another in

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this concluding one. The great truth here declared to be attested to is, that *Jesus is the Son of God*. That we might not mistake the Person, of whom this high character is predicated, the apostle expressly affirms, that this Son of God is *He who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ*, who having been conceived and born into the world as Immanuel the Son of God, appeared more fully in this character at his baptism, when he entered on his public ministry for our salvation, and at his last sufferings and death, when he accomplished it, and who on all these occasions, and by the gifts of the divine Spirit he was endowed with, received from God, and exhibited to men the most convincing proofs that he was the Son of God and Saviour of the world. To this most important truth three evidences are mentioned as bearing witness on earth; the Spirit, the water, and the blood. Three witnesses also are mentioned to be in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. Christ is here represented in two characters, the Word and the Son; the Word, as he co-exists with the other Persons in the same Godhead, and the Son as he was born and appeared in our nature on earth; the Word as he is a witness, the Word made flesh or Son as he is witnessed unto; the Word as essentially connected with God in heaven; the Son as conversant in human nature with men on earth; the Word, in short, in his divine, the Son of God in his complex or mediatorial Person. The First Person therefore is here called the Father; because the Second was now incarnate, and had appeared as his Son. As this is the truth to be attested to, the Second Person is here represented as a witness, not in his filial character as God-man; for in this character he would not be purely a divine and heavenly Witness, as the other persons were, and as the whole witnesses are affirmed to be; and

and would also bear witness of himself, in the very same Person, contrary to what he says, *John* v. 31. But he is represented, like the other divine Persons, in his divine personal character alone. In this divine personality he is called, not the Son, but the Word: And as the co-essential Word, he concurs with the other divine Persons in witnessing, that as the divine Word incarnate, by a divine generation, he is the Son of God and Saviour of the World. It is evident then that the apostle makes a distinction between Christ as Second Person in the Godhead, and as he is Son of God: In his divine personality he calls him the Word; as the Word incarnate he calls him the Son. So he declares in his Gospel,—“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld his glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.” *John* i. 14. And so here he represents him in his divine Person as the Word, bearing witness with the other Persons in the Godhead, that in his incarnate Personality he is the Son of God. It is easy then to see, in opposition to Mr. Gib, that the First Person in the Godhead might there be called the Father, and is so called, without implying that the Second Person, till incarnate, is the Son. It is easy to see, that the term *Word* here denotes Christ's divine Person, as a Subsistence in the Godhead; and the term *Son* his mediatorial Person, as Immanuel the Saviour; for as Mr Gib is obliged to own, when he is spoke of in his divine Person alone, he is expressly called, not the Son, but the Word; and when he is spoke of in his complex Person as the divine Word made flesh, even Jesus Christ who came by water and blood, he is called not the Word, but the Son. So that by Mr. Gib's explication of them, the most consistent sense of these precious words, and of the whole passage, must be abolished, but by the ex-

plication of them I have given, their consistency with themselves, and with the whole tenour of revelation as to this article is preserved, and they join in the general evidence, that Jesus Christ, as the eternal Word incarnate, and only as incarnate, is the Son of God.

Such are the texts of scripture Mr. Gib hath adduced to prove, that the Second Person in the co-essential and co-equal Trinity is not equally self-existent as the First Person, but that he exists only by generation, and is the Son of God from eternity in this sense. I have examined these texts in order, and from the scope of the passages from which they are taken, from the natural and scriptural signification of their words, and from the application made of them by the other inspired writers, have endeavoured carefully and candidly to ascertain their meaning. And now, upon a review of the whole, I must make these following observations: 1st, That Mr. Gib hath brought no *direct* evidence, not even one single text, that affirms the Second Person in the Trinity to be begotten from eternity by the First Person; or that he owes his subsistence in the Godhead to any such generation. 2^d, That of the passages of scripture which Mr. Gib hath produced as his *indirect* evidence of his doctrine, some relate wholly to Christ as the eternal Word, but give not the smallest intimation of his being from eternity a Son: They represent him as a co-eternal personal Subsistence in the Godhead, but never as a generated divine Person; and so are proofs of his eternal divinity; but no proofs of his eternal Sonship: Nay, being totally silent on that head, and unsupported by any direct evidence of that opinion, are rather presumptions against it. 3^d, That all those passages which any ways mention Christ as Son of God, or represent him in this character, explained accord-
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ing to every rule of accurate and just interpretation, are either predictions of the Son of God, as the Second Person of the Godhead incarnate, or descriptions of him as such, and of his being begotten as Son of God in this his incarnation; and so in place of being proofs, they are confutations of Mr. Gib's doctrine, and in place of being confutations of my explication of our Saviour's Sonship, they are the clearest confirmations of it. They unanimously hold forth our blessed Saviour to be Son of God, as he is the glorious Immanuel, the co-essential Word made flesh by a divine generation, and shew us what all scripture declares, and the very nature of the subject not a little confirms, That the generation affirmed of Christ in scripture, gives not existence or subsistence to his divine Person in the Godhead, but gives personal union and subsistence to that divine self-existent Person with his human nature in his incarnation, making him, in his divine personality, God's co-essential, co-equal, self-existent Word, and as this divine Word thus incarnate—his begotten Son.

Along with this first part, I meant to have published also what relates to the other parts of the plan I have proposed: But on second thoughts have resolved to delay these publications at present. The principal thing in controversial divinity is the scripture-evidence by which the different opinions are respectively supported. If any of them want this, every farther refutation of them is superfluous; if they have this, the most virulent and vile misrepresentation of them hurts only the opponent himself, but not the truth he opposes.

I have nothing in view but the honour of my divine Master, by giving him that supreme self-existent divinity equal in all respects with any other Person in the Godhead which the scripture gives him;

him;—and by ascribing to him, as Immanuel, that generation and Sonship perfectly consistent with his self-existent divine Person, which the scripture ascribes to him. The more I have consulted the Sacred Oracles, the more I am convinced they testify these things of Christ; and the more I have considered this explication of his Sonship, the more I am convinced that it consists best with scripture, and with his all-perfect divinity, that it places that great truth on its natural and scriptural foundation, and raises it above all the attacks to which, by other explications of his Sonship, it has long been exposed. Should any person place this great article in a light more agreeable to scripture, more honouring to Christ, or more comforting to the Christian, I should rejoice in the discovery; as I have no object but the discovery of truth, and wish to follow divine truth wherever by evidence of scripture she appears to lead. And if Mr. Gib, or any other person, will treat this subject as a gentleman, a divine, and a Christian, upon the authority of scripture; I will meet him on that ground whenever he pleases. But if Antichristian prejudice and passion have the place of the Christian spirit, faith, and temper; and misrepresentation the place of fair and candid reasoning on principles of scripture, I shall be obliged, either to pass over such writers in silent pity of their persons and contempt of their performances, or to place them in that point of view they shall be found to deserve.

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